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SHOES DON'T MATTER WHEN A BRIGHT KID IS UPWARD BOUND.

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THIS ARTICLE DESCRIBES THE ACTIVITIES OF UPWARD BOUND PROJECTS AT BELLARMINE COLLEGE IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE. UPWARD BOUND IS A NATIONWIDE, FEDERALLY-SPONSORED PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE DISADVANTAGED HIGH SCHOOL YOUTHS TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION. DURING A SUMMER PHASE THE PROJECTS IN LOUISVILLE PROVIDED SMALLER CLASSES, INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION, AND INTENSIVE COUNSELING. THE CURRICULUM WAS "FLEXIBLE" AND AT TIMES "IMPROMPTU," AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES WAS ENCOURAGED. PROJECT PERSONNEL MAINTAINED WEEKLY CONTACT WITH THE STUDENTS AFTER THEY RETURNED TO THEIR HIGH SCHOOLS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE STUDENTS HAVE NOT YET INCREASED THEIR GRADES, IT IS FELT THAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED IN THEIR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR. OF THE 16 HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WHO COMPLETED THE FIRST UPWARD BOUND CYCLE IN THE SUMMER OF 1966, 11 HAVE GONE ON TO COLLEGE. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE "SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT," VOLUME 3, NUMBER 6, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1968. (DK)

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Sargent Shriver, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, at Bellarmine college.

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SHOES DON'T MATTER WHEN A BRIGHT KID

By Ward Sinclair

A pair of shoes is really, in the loosest sense, where the whole thing begins and ends.

There was a boy, a bright boy with a lackluster record, who was so ashamed of his dilapidated shoes that he thought he couldn't make it in Upward Bound.

"That's all right," the Rev. Joseph Voor assured him, "come and give it a try . . . the shoes don't mean anything."

That was the summer of 1966, when Father Voor and co-workers at Bellarmine College in Louisville were scouting about for students to put into Upward Bound. The boy gave it a try. A year later, private-school talent searchers were on his trail. He was yanked from his tough Louisville neighborhood and dropped into a New Jersey Ivy League prep school, all expenses paid.

That is one of the more dramatic results of Bellarmine's Upward Bound project for some 50 youngsters. Sixteen seniors completed the first Upward Bound cycle last summer and 11 of them have gone on to college. Most of them, Father Voor thinks, would not have made it to college without Upward Bound. Somewhere, something has clicked. The pieces have started to fit together.

Upward Bound is the federal government's project designed to take bright youngsters from lower-income neighborhoods, give them a taste of college, whet their appetites for more and push them on to higher education or vocational training. [Southern Education Report, September, 1966.]

That, at least in the case of Bellarmine, seems to be

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S UPWARD BOUND

happening. It seems also about to happen at the nearby University of Louisville, where 105 are enrolled. But Upward Bound is having other effects at the two schools—mainly stimulating new thought and action. This spirit of change already has filtered down to at least one Louisville junior high school, whose principal worked with Upward Bound and has installed a miniature version of it in his own school.

In many instances, Upward Bound on campus means that teachers finally have the time, resources and desire to put to practice some of the ideas that theorists have spouted for a long time—individualized instruction, classroom innovation and flexibility, intense counseling, and the like. In other instances it means playing it by ear. That, too, has happened at Bellarmine and the University of Louisville.

For example. it means getting former boxing champ Archie Moore to come to a party to cajole the kids into thinking a little better of themselves.

"What do you kids want to be?" asked Archie Moore, wearing a baseball cap and conservative brown suit, strutting up and down like a drill sergeant between the ranks.

"Nuclear physicist," murmured a boy.

"You ashamed of being a nuclear physicist? You're going to be an awfully weak one," said Moore.

Then everybody started shouting what he or she wants to be.

Or it means bringing in part of the Kennedy legend, Sargent Shriver himself, putting him before a class and just letting him talk extemporaneously.

"What did you flunk?" the poverty war leader asked a boy.

"I flunked typing, English . . ." came the answer amid laughter of the class.

"No, that's good," said Shriver. "That's what we want. If everybody made A's, we wouldn't need this. What else did you flunk?"

"Typing, English, biology," said the boy.

"That's enough," said Shriver, interrupting again with a grin.

Or another time it means bringing in an itinerant hippie couple to show "a negative side of life," as one teacher put it. After lengthy give and take, the Upward Bound youngsters examined their own ideals and decided they don't aspire to the hippie way.

Added to this impromptu programming is the extensive and intensive counseling—more than a public school could hope to offer—and the individualized attention in tutoring. This feature of the summer program has been extended into the year-round Upward Bound, which maintains weekly contact with the pupils after they have returned to their high schools.

"We intend for each student to have some project that will keep him in contact with the teacher he had in the summer," said Father Voor. "In addition, we have other meetings and seminars, to discuss current events, school problems and community issues. We've given each of them a subscription to *Newsweek*, going to their homes. Once a month we'll be talking about this, trying to stimulate their thinking."

Father Voor continued: "In a sense, we're trying to find out what seems to work with these people. As enough of them go back into their schools and the public-school people see the changes, we hope the schools will try to innovate. We hope to help through Upward Bound—to have an impact on the whole educational system so that it will be recognized that you have to change some of the traditional ways of working with youngsters from disadvantaged areas."

One example of this sort of innovation is the way mathematical laws of probability were taught at the U. of L.—an elaborate gimmick that brought some indignant letters of criticism to the local editor after it was publicized. The teachers set up an imaginary race track—Upward Downs—and took bets on imaginary horses. Students figured odds, payoffs and the "pool" in various betting categories.

A racing program used in math class at the University of Louisville Upward Bound.

The University of Louisville has not yet had a graduating class of Upward Bound pupils. But the program director, Mrs. Eleanor Young Alsbrook, says the progress shown by most of the youngsters so far has been sufficient to make this "one of the finest programs the federal government has sponsored." Mrs. Alsbrook is a sister of Whitney Young Jr., director of the National Urban League.

"We've seen great changes in these youngsters—changes in their attitudes toward school, in their personal appearance and pride, in their desire to succeed," Mrs. Alsbrook said. "What shows through from our experience is that more counseling and smaller classes are needed in the public schools. That's really what makes Upward Bound so different—the small classes that allow the youngsters to express themselves and learn through discussion."

Commented Vincent West, a student at Bellarmine: "Nobody was pushing you to do anything. They encouraged us to look beneath the surface of things. In high school, the teacher knows more than the student. In Upward Bound, the student's opinion weighs as much as the teacher's. If you had a good sound idea, it was worth hearing."

So far, the University of Louisville program has not caused a notable upswing in grades for most of the pupils. "We really didn't expect to see a great change in grades. I've always said we will not now see the real progress. It will come out 10 years from now. And even if they don't go on and finish college, Upward Bound will have made them want their own children to go to college. We will count the results in future generations," Mrs. Alsbrook said.

Both Bellarmine and the U. of L. have gone to some lengths to involve parents in Upward Bound activities. A parent day, campus tour, concert, talent show have taken adults with their children to the colleges. "It's made them more interested in education for their children," she said.

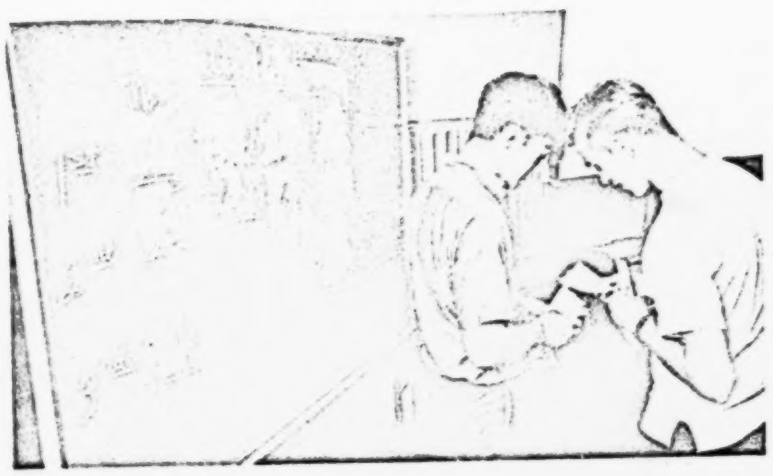
The mother of eight children, one of whom was enrolled in Upward Bound at Bellarmine and then won a college scholarship, said: "This program has done miracles for Eric. He wouldn't have got to college without it. They brought out what was really in him. He is a lamplight now to my other children. They all want to outdo him in school."

Purely by coincidence, Eric's brothers and sisters may be bumping into some of the Upward Bound techniques in their own neighborhood junior high school, Shawnee, in the West End of Louisville.

Shawnee's principal, Dawson Orman [SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT, April, 1967], was assistant director of the Bellarmine Upward Bound project. He took some of the innovative spirit back to his school, which has almost three-fourths Negro enrollment.

"Upward Bound is like, well, it's like doubling the recipe," said Orman recently. "We've taken some of these ideas and applied them to our own situation. . . . We realized the kids had to be given something of really deep interest to them. So we have started an enrichment program, in which we give no grades

Left—Two students in the University of Louisville's Upward Bound program settle up with play money before a toteboard showing pay-offs in imaginary horse races. Below—Chemistry teacher William Ratliff helps a girl with a problem at the University of Louisville. Bottom—Art in the Upward Bound traveling show.



and in which seventh- and eighth-graders are allowed to choose their own subjects."

These include photography, travel, psychology, home economics for boys, conversational Spanish and a special work-study type program for boys 16 and older, designed to find part-time jobs for them in the neighborhood.

Shawnee also has begun team teaching in mathematics and science, has extended the operating hours of the school library so more youngsters can use it and has instituted individual study for top students, a feature borrowed from Upward Bound.

"We've come to the point where we don't worry so much about tradition," said Orman. "We don't worry about upheaval. In Upward Bound we were forced into complete innovation. Kids nowadays have to be challenged. A lot of these new things can be done in the public schools. It's a matter of taking the bull by the horns. Of course, it's awfully easy to say finances or crowded conditions will prevent us from doing this or that . . . but there are so many things you can do in the classroom without money."

His work with Upward Bound youngsters naturally made Orman think back to Shawnee and what he might do there. "We got some boys with all F's and they had IQ's of 120. I couldn't help feeling it was not all the fault of the boy. We had failed somewhere to make school interesting. Too often we just say this is a dumb kid," Orman said.

And that's just what Father Voor was talking about. O